

Friday, September 8, 2006

NTSB Launches To Regional Jet Accident In Lexington, Kentucky



The National Transportation Safety Board launched a team of approximately 25 investigators and staff to Lexington, Kentucky to investigate the August 27, 2006 crash of Comair 5191. Forty-nine fatalities resulted from the crash of the regional jet, which was carrying 47 passengers and 3 crew members. This crash represented the first passenger fatalities on a jet airliner in the United States in almost five years.

NTSB senior aviation investigator Joseph Sedor served as Investigator-in-Charge of the investigation. Member Debbie Hersman, was the principal spokesperson on scene. Newly confirmed NTSB Vice Chairman Robert Sumwalt also joined the team for his training accident

Wreckage from regional jet crash of Comair 5191

NTSB Highlights “Most Wanted” Transportation Safety Improvements – State Issues

The National Transportation Safety Board updated its Most Wanted Transportation Safety Improvements list for 2006. All issue areas from last year remained on the list.

The recommendations on the Most Wanted List asked for about 400 safety improvements in the States and Territories. The Board reviewed the status of the 261 actions by the States. The Board changed the status of 53 recommendations in the following manner: Sufficient progress was made to close 23 recommendations, and positive action was identified in 19 States. There was a lack of progress on 11 actions that the Board classified as unacceptable.

Issues highlighted on the “Most Wanted” list are:

- Improved Child Occupant Protection
- School Buses at Grade Crossings
- Primary Seat Belt Laws
- Hard Core Drinking Driving
- Youth Highway Safety
- Recreational Boating Safety

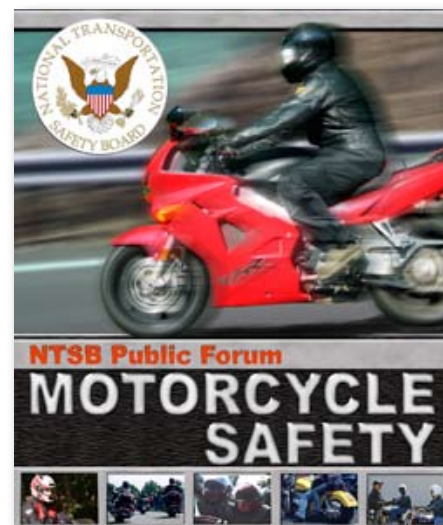
NTSB To Hold Two-Day Motorcycle Forum

The National Transportation Safety Board will hold a 2-day public forum on motorcycle safety beginning on Tuesday, September 12, 2006. Board Member Debbie Hersman will preside as Chairman of the forum, which will be held at the NTSB Board Room and Conference Center in Washington, DC.

The goal of the public forum is to gather information about ongoing motorcycle safety research, initiatives, and countermeasures that might reduce the likelihood of motorcycle accidents and fatalities. NTSB staff will lead technical panel discussions that will examine major aspects of motorcycle safety, including rider training and licensing, rider protective equipment, vehicle design, and education of motorists and motorcyclists. Representatives from the motorcycle industry, government, and motorcycling organizations will be invited to present their perspectives.

During the forum, the NTSB will examine issues raised by a number of recent motorcycle accidents and the reasons for the increase in motorcycle fatalities during the past decade. Since 1997, motorcycle fatalities have increased, in number and rate, while highway fatalities have decreased.

The agenda for the forum is posted on the NTSB's website. The public is invited to attend the forum or to view the live proceedings on the NTSB public internet site at www.ntsb.gov.



NTSB Recognizes Alaska For Enacting Two Highway Safety Laws

National Transportation Safety Board's Kevin Quinlin, Chief of the Office of Advocacy, presented State Safety Leadership Awards to the State of Alaska and four state legislators for adopting a graduated driver licensing law for young drivers and a primary safety belt use law.

The following were honored at the ceremony in Anchorage: Senator Con Bunde, Representative Lesil McGuire, and Representative Bruce Weyhrauch. Senator Ralph Seekins was honored at the ceremony in Fairbanks.

Alaska had one of the nation's weakest licensing laws for young drivers. Although teen drivers make up only 7.24 percent of the driving population in Alaska, they were involved in 15.7 percent of all highway fatalities in 2003. Alaska's comprehensive graduated driver licensing law includes a 3-stage system so that young drivers can develop skills in a safer environment and "graduate" to the next phase and to full licensure.

Alaska's belt use rate of 76.7% in 2004 was worse than that of 30 other States and consistently below the national average. There was a slight increase in 2005. With the secondary enforcement restrictions now removed from the belt use law, the use rate should increase and fatalities decrease as they have in 24 other States with primary safety belt enforcement.

NTSB Has New Chairman And Vice Chairman

On August 11, Mark V. Rosenker was sworn in as the 11th Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board. He became a Member of the NTSB and Vice Chairman in March 2003. Since March 2005, Rosenker has been Acting Chairman following the expiration of Ellen Engleman Conners' term as Chairman. He remained Acting Chairman until becoming Chairman last month. His term as Chairman will run for two years, and his second term as Member expires at the end of 2010.

"I am extremely grateful to President Bush and Members of the United States Senate for the confidence they have shown in me," Chairman Rosenker said, "and I look forward to leading the NTSB in carrying out its challenging mission. I am also committed to maintaining the Board's position as one of the most effective and respected agencies in federal government."

On August 21, Robert L. Sumwalt was sworn in as a Member and Vice Chairman of the Board. Earlier in August, he was confirmed by the US Senate to fill out the remainder of Member Richard Healing's term and a new five year term beginning January 1, 2007. Prior to his Board appointment, Sumwalt was Manager of Aviation for SCANA Corporation, a Fortune 500 energy-based company. Vice Chairman Sumwalt previously had been a captain for both Piedmont Airlines and US Airways for more than 24 years. During his aviation career Captain Sumwalt participated in the NTSB's investigation of the crash of USAir flight 427 in Aliquippa PA, and the Canadian investigation of the crash of Swissair flight 111.



*Mark V. Rosenker,
Chairman*



*Robert L. Sumwalt,
Vice Chairman*